

JEWELRY MEMENTO CHAMBER

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JEWELRY MEMENTO CHAMBER

RELATED PATENT APPLICATIONS:

This patent application is a continuation-in-part filed under 37 CFR §1.53 of pending continued prosecution application filed 6/14/01 and relating back to United States Patent Application Serial Number 09/427,530 filed 10/26/99 entitled JEWELRY MEMENTO CHAMBER; said application in its entirety is hereby expressly incorporated by reference into the present application.

DESCRIPTION

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY:

The present invention finds applicability in the personal adornment industries, and more specifically in the jewelry design industries.

BACKGROUND ART:

Necklaces, bracelets and broaches are mere examples of types of jewelry from which pendants are often suspended. Locketts and other types of compartment-styles of jewelry provide openable enclosures for sentimental items such as photographs and the like. Similarly, amber is often utilized in jewelry design because of the transparency of the mineral which permits a viewer to appreciate items such as insects that have been encased therein. It has been appreciated by the present applicant that many jewelry wearers will desire to have openable compartments built into jewelry items designed to contain sentimental articles and other memorabilia. In many situations, the wearer of such jewelry will desire to display the enclosed item(s) through the walls of the compartment. Therefore, it has been recognized as desirable in some instances to construct such a compartment from transparent materials that permit viewing of the enclosed article.

DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION:

In the disclosed embodiment(s), the present invention provides the desirable enhancements described above for a piece of jewelry, and especially for pendant-style pieces. As has previously been demonstrated by the popularity of such jewelry designs as the locket, the wearers of jewelry often desire to carry special and sentimental objects and things close to them, and using a piece of jewelry as the carrier provides a highly desirable mode. Those things desired to be carried may range from cuttings of a child's hair to the ashes of a deceased loved one. Other items of a more frivolous nature may be desired to be changed out at different times for variation.

The position of a pendant on a chain about the neck of the wearer in the form of a necklace is highly desirable to some because of the convenience in putting such a jewelry piece on and taking the same off. Such a jewelry style also places the enclosed item symbolically close to the wearer's heart.

In many instances, the wearer will desire to maintain the enclosed object or material private and to themselves. An apt example would be when the ashes of a loved one are deposited into the carrying pendant. In these cases, the wearer would normally select a container which is opaque, and through which others can not see. In other instances, however, the wearer may desire that the contained object or material be displayed to others for viewing. In those cases, the wearer would select a container constructed from transparent material; in the case of quartz, the interior surface can be polished to achieve the transparent effect.

The utilization of natural crystal has been discovered as providing both the transparent and opaque qualities described above as alternatively desirable. One particularly favored material example is quartz. Naturally occurring elongate crystalline structures of quartz have been utilized in the construction of the present invention with great success. In the instances

where visibility of the contained objects is desired, a transparent quartz is selected for construction of the containing structural portion of the pendant. In this embodiment, the natural crystalline structure of the transparent quartz provides a prismatic effect that in many cases enhances the display presentation of the contained object or material. In the other situations where the wearer desires concealment of the enclosed object or material, opaque quartz can be selected for the construction of the containing portion of the jewelry piece. In this case, a natural crystalline structure still provides an attractive exterior appearance, while maintaining privacy with respect to those items or materials carried therein.

In many cases, the owner of the jewelry piece will desire to exchange items within the containment portion. Therefore, the ability to open and close the container has been provided.

Technically, a mechanism was required for facilitating the releasable engagement of a closure member to the hollowed crystalline structure. This has been accommodated by incorporating an adapter between a threaded cap and a mouth opening of the crystalline container body. Still further, a fastening assembly has been developed for properly and releasably securing the adapter at the mouth of the container.

In at least one embodiment, the present invention takes the form of an article of jewelry configured as a container for enclosing memorabilia. The article of jewelry includes a containment body having at least one opening configured for accommodating insertion of memorabilia into an interior compartment thereof. A releasable closure member is provided for configuring the article of jewelry between an open configuration in which the memorabilia is insertible into and removable from the interior compartment and a closed configuration in which the memorabilia is retained within the interior compartment. An adapter is utilized that has one portion configured for engagement with the containment body and another portion configured for engagement with the closure member for accommodating coupling of the closure member to the containment body.

In alternative embodiments, the containment body is constructed from substantially transparent mineral crystal that establishes a prismatic-effect for viewing memorabilia contained therein or from opaque mineral crystal that obscures visibility of memorabilia contained within the containment body.

As shown, the interior compartment has an elongate shape formed within a hollow space within the containment body. The adaptor is tubular in shape for permitting passage of the memorabilia there through into and out of the interior compartment. The portion of the adaptor configured for engagement with the containment body is adapted for releasable engagement with the containment body and the portion configured for engagement with the closure member is adapted for releasable engagement with the closure member. At least one opening into the interior compartment of the containment body forms a mouth that is configured for accommodating insertion therein of at least a part of the portion of the adaptor configured for releasable engagement with the containment body. An interior surficial shape of the mouth is configured for establishing a substantial conformance fit about an exterior surface of the part of the portion of the adaptor configured for insertion into the mouth of the containment body. A releasable securement assembly is provided for releasably securing the adaptor within the mouth of the containment body. There is at least one, and preferably two set screw receiving apertures extending through the compartment body between an exterior surface of the compartment body and the interior surface of the mouth, the set screw receiving apertures each being transversely oriented to a longitudinal axis of the adaptor. Each of the two set screw receiving apertures are opposingly positioned, one to the other, at least partially across the mouth of the compartment body. This positioning may be directly across from one another, or directed from any of the two faces of the exterior of the compartment body. This could be the case when it is desired to have the screws on a back side of the

compartment body so that they are hidden from view when a front side of the compartment body is observed.

Still further, in the illustrated embodiment, two set screws are included, each threadedly engaged within one of the two set screw receiving apertures and each of the two set screws are ultimately positioned in abutting engagement with the adaptor positioned in the mouth of the containment body or received in provided apertures through the wall of the sleeve-style adaptor. The portion of the adaptor inserted into the mouth of the containment body has a receiving area upon the exterior surface thereof for abuttingly receiving tips of the two set screws, the receiving area being provided for resisting disengagement of the adaptor

from the compartment body when the two set screws are abuttingly engaged upon the receiving surface. The receiving area is located in a recess in the exterior surface of the adaptor. More exactly, the receiving area is located in a circumferential groove, the groove encircling the adaptor at the exterior surface of the portion of the adaptor that is configured for insertion into the mouth of the containment body. Alternatively, apertures may be provided

in the adaptor for receiving the set screws. The portion of the adaptor inserted into the mouth of the containment body is cylindrically shaped. The adaptor includes a stop surface for abutting a lip of the mouth of the containment body for establishing proper positioning of the adaptor in the mouth of the containment body. The portion of the adaptor configured for releasable engagement with the closure member is at least partially threaded for mating

engagement with a threaded portion of the closure member. The closure member takes the form of a cap having a threaded interior portion configured for mating engagement with the threaded portion of the closure member. A loop is coupled to the cap for receiving a suspending member such as a necklace chain utilized for hanging the article of jewelry from a wearer's neck.

The general beneficial effects described above apply generally to each of the exemplary descriptions and characterizations of the devices and mechanisms disclosed herein. The specific structures through which these benefits are delivered will be described in detail herein below.

5 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS:

In the following, the invention will be described in greater detail by way of examples and with reference to the attached drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is an elevational exploded view of an illustrative embodiment of the present invention; and

10 Figure 2 is an elevational assembled view of the illustrative embodiment shown in Figure 1 of the present invention.

Figure 3 is an elevational assembled view of an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

MODE(S) FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION:

15 As required, detailed embodiments of the present invention are disclosed herein; however, it is to be understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely exemplary of the invention that may be embodied in various and alternative forms. The figures are not necessarily to scale; some features may be exaggerated or minimized to show details of particular components. Therefore, specific structural and functional details disclosed herein 20 are not to be interpreted as limiting, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to variously employ the present invention.

Referring to Figure 1, an embodiment of the present invention in the form of an article of jewelry configured as a container for enclosing memorabilia is shown. The jewelry article includes a containment body 10 formed from an elongate piece of natural quartz having an interior compartment 15 bored into a center space thereof. Access into the interior compartment 15 is accommodated at a top end thereof through a mouth opening.

As illustrated, the containment body 10 is of a crystalline structure having a plurality of exterior flat surfaces. Because a preferred material of construction for the containment body 10 is a natural quartz, it can be selected or conditioned to be transparent or opaque with respect to the interior compartment 15.

In the transparent embodiment, the different angles of refraction through which a contained object is visualized causes a prismatic effect that establishes a unique display presentation of the contained object or material to a viewing person. If the quartz crystal is selected to be opaque, concealment of an object or material maintained within the containment body 10 is affected. A concealing effect can also be established when the interior compartment 15 is bored into the body 10. As a result of the drilling of the compartment 15, the interior walls will appear hazy to the extent that one cannot see there across and a contained item will not be visible from the outside. Alternatively, this same roughened interior wall can be polished after drilling to establish a transparent embodiment of the invention.

A releasable closure member 35 is provided in the form of a threaded cap. A threaded portion of the closure member 35 is arranged for threaded engagement upon a portion 30 of an adaptor 20 that is configured for engagement with the closure member 35. An oppositely positioned portion 25 of the adaptor 20 is configured for releasable engagement with the containment body 10. Through utilization of the adaptor 20, the containment body 10 is made releasably engageable with the threaded cap version of the closure member 35.

A securement assembly is provided for attaching the adaptor 20 to the containment body 10 within the mouth opening. In the illustrated embodiment, the securement assembly includes a pair of set screw receiving apertures 50 through which a pair of set screws 45 are inserted. When the adaptor 20 is properly installed in the mouth of the containment body 10, the set screws 45 can be advanced in the receiving apertures 50 until a distal end of the screws 45 abuttingly engage the exterior surface of the adaptor 20 at a receiving area 27 thereupon. In one embodiment, the receiving area 27 is located within a recess that takes the form of a circumferential groove surrounding the lower portion of the adaptor 20 securable to the containment body 10. With the tip of the screws 45 anchored in the groove-style receiving area 27, withdrawal of the adaptor 20 from the mouth of the container body 10 is resisted. Alternatively, the set screws 45 are received in apertures through the wall of the sleeve-like adaptor 20. The aperture in the adaptor 20 may be threaded, or merely sized to engage the threads of the set screw 45. To secure the screw 45 in the aperture, the tip of the screw may then be flattened, burred or otherwise expanded with respect to the aperture at an interior surface of the adaptor 20 thereby preventing withdrawal of the same.

The threaded portion 30 of the adaptor 20 is enlarged with respect to the lower cylindrical sleeve portion. As a result, a lower under-cut surface of that threaded portion 30 forms a stop surface adapted for engagement with a top lip of the mouth of the containment body 10 for assuring proper relative positioning of the adaptor 20 with respect to the set screw securing assembly.

To facilitate suspension of the pendant-style jewelry piece about a wearer's neck, a loop 40 is integrally constructed upon the threaded cap for receiving a suspension strand such as a necklace chain.

As an enhancement to the jewelry piece's appearance, flat surfaces of the closure member 35 are arranged for alignment with corresponding flat surfaces of the quartz crystal

containment body 10. Proper alignment can be achieved through the configuration of the threaded interior of the cap with respect to the lower stop surface that halts advancement of the cap onto the adaptor 20 when the upper lip of the mouth to the interior compartment 15 of the containment body 10 is abutted.

5 Figure 3 depicts an alternative embodiment where the securement assembly is a fastener such as glue, epoxy, thermosetting resin, polymer resin coating or other adhesives. This fastener is preferably applied to the lower cylindrical sleeve portion of the adaptor 20. Alternatively, the fastener may be applied to the interior compartment 15 of the containment body 10. Once the fastener is applied, the sleeve portion of the adaptor 20 is fittingly coupled
10 within the interior compartment 15. Such fastener is desirably thinly applied as to not detract from the memorabilia that is inserted within the containment body 20.

Although the present invention has been described and illustrated in detail, it is to be understood that the same should be considered for illustrative and exemplary purposes only,
15 and is not to be taken as a limitation. The spirit and scope of the present invention are to be limited only by the terms of the claims presented hereafter.